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THE AUSTRIAN COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION IN ROME

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Description

A report on the prearranged attempt of a small group of Austrians in Rome to open the Legation and obtain recognition from the Allied representatives as soon as they entered the city.

4 August 1944

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SUMMARY

A small group of Austrian exiles, followers of Egon Baron Berger von Waldenegg, the last Austrian Minister to the Quirinal, reopened the Austrian Legation in Rome, 5 June 1944.

It was apparently their intention to present the Allied authorities with a *fait accompli*, and thus, if possible, force the granting of their request for recognition as an Austrian Committee of Liberation.

Since they represented one of two factions, recognition was withheld, and the Swiss Embassy, as custodian for the German Government, forced them to leave the Legation.

However, they were granted permission to call a meeting of all Austrians in Rome to elect a representative committee as well as to open an Austrian Office. While official recognition has been denied this group, they nevertheless are said to possess a monopoly on communications with the Allied authorities, and by their activities and continued existence tend to create the impression that they are a *de facto* government in exile.

Brief autobiographies of the leaders in Rome are attached.

THE AUSTRIAN COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION IN ROME

I

While the Allied Armies were approaching Rome, a group of less than a dozen of the estimated 300 Austrian exiles in that city established a Committee of Liberation under the chairmanship of the last Austrian Minister to Rome, Egon Baron Berger von Waldenegg. The former Austrian Legation was occupied, the Committee sought de facto recognition by the Allied Control Commission, and it was obviously hoped that refusal would be difficult in view of the fait accompli. The group in Rome is merely one of many similar Austrian associations to be found in New York, Toronto, London, Stockholm, Algiers, Cairo, and several of the Latin American countries.

II

When the Austrian exiles, accompanied by Italian Army Officers, opened the former Austrian Legation in Rome on 5 June 1944, a sign was posted which stated that the building was "The Austrian Legation to the Italian Government."[1] Notices were published in the newspapers calling upon all Austrians in Rome to present themselves for registration at the Legation and to receive identity cards. These signs, cards, registration blanks and the like had been previously prepared with Vatican assistance. The Provost Marshal's office and the Allied Control Commission were notified that the Legation was prepared to assist the Allies in the liberation of Austria.

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[1] The material upon which this report is almost exclusively based was obtained by the R and A, OSS Outpost in Rome. Since relatives of some of the men discussed are still in Germany, this information should be handled with the greatest of care.

The attempt to reactivate the Austrian Legation in Rome was abortive. The group which initiated this coup were supporters of Baron Berger von Waldenegg, and as such, represented one of two active factions within the Austrian emigration, and did not represent all the exiles in Rome. Furthermore the official representative of the Allied Control Commission pointed out that the government which the Legation purported to represent was non-existent, and that, in any case, the question of recognition could not be decided by Allied agencies in Rome. Finally, the Swiss Embassy, as custodian for the German Government, sent Allied soldiers and Caribinieri to guard the property and requested the Austrians to vacate the premises. The Legation was again closed 6 June.

As an alternative, the Control Commission agreed to permit the opening of an Austrian Office in a room in the Hotel Majestic. Here, Bishop Aloys Hudal, close friend of Berger von Waldenegg, and a staff of five had registered 267 Austrians as of 21 June. Applications were also received for identity cards which when issued were signed by Bishop Hudal.[2] Nationality is determined on the basis of the 1938 requirements. In addition, those who come to the Austrian Office to register are given an opportunity to sign a petition asking Bishop Hudal to form a Committee of Austrian Liberation based on broad democratic principles and consisting

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2. A recent report states that this activity has brought the Bishop into disfavor with Vatican authorities. It is felt that by performing the functions of a police official, the Bishop has demeaned himself and his office.

of representatives of "the four Austrian political parties - Communist, Liberal, Social Democratic and Christian Social."

An intense struggle developed at once over the composition of this Committee. After Berger von Waldenegg had taken the first step toward establishing the Committee, Karl Bambas, an Austrian dentist who had practiced in Rome for some 21 years, claimed that he should be chairman of any such group. He based his claim on his activity in organizing years previously an association of Austrians resident in Rome. Bambas was one of about 30 Austrians who sought sanctuary in Vatican buildings when the Germans entered Rome. He, together with the more active members of this group, had previously rendered what assistance he could to Austrians, Jews, and Allied prisoners. With the [redacted] assistance of Vatican authorities, Bambas' group provided hiding-places for escaped prisoners and assisted in forwarding messages (particularly from British prisoners) through contacts with the British representative to the Vatican.

The conflict between Bambas and Berger von Waldenegg stems from personal as well as political differences. One incident will suffice as illustration. A young woman exile accused Bambas of immoral approaches. Bishop Hudal, Rector of the Collegio dell' Anima, where the exiles were housed, requested Bambas to move out. Bambas refused and threatened, if he were forced to leave, to give the S.S. the names and report the activities of all 30 of the Austrians who were hiding in the Collegio. While this move caused general indignation in the little colony, it proved effective, and Bambas remained.

The Waldenegg group admits that while Bambas is demagogically inclined, he is nevertheless a man of unquestioned patriotism and without personal political aspirations in the future Austria. As a Social Democrat, Bambas denounced Berger von Waldenegg and Froelichsthal for having held high office under the dictatorships of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. This past connection, he asserts, automatically excludes them from any claim which they might have to set up a representative committee. Bambas insists that at the very least he be made Vice-Chairman of the proposed Committee of Liberation. Bambas has sent letters incorporating these claims and charges to General Eisenhower, General Clark and other high Allied officers.

The Waldenegg faction was for some time in a quandary, since the Control Commission informed the Baron and Froelichsthal that it could not deal with two factions separately, but that if a committee were formed which represented all factions, the Commission would then undertake to forward Austrian requests to the Allied governments.

In mid-June, Waldenegg and his followers were still reluctant to accept Bambas as a member of the Committee of Liberation. By 2 July, however, Bambas had apparently won his minimum demand. On that date, Bishop Hudal sent a communication to the Political Section of the Allied Control Commission which stated that a meeting of Austrians in Rome had elected the following members to constitute an Austrian Committee of Liberation: Temporary Chairman, Bishop Hudal; Vice-Chairman, Karl Bambas; members, Rudolf Kronau, Ernst Breuer, Maximilian Neufeld, and Josef

Podhostnik. Bishop Hudal, in the same communication, reported that the Committee had placed Berger von Waldenegg in charge of the Austrian Office. In reply, the Control Commission acknowledged the receipt of Bishop Hudal's communication, and then pointed out that Allied authorities in Italy were not in a position to accord any recognition to the Committee.

Before the Committee had been constituted in its final form, an eight-point program of action was drawn up. The group obviously was attempting to justify its past activity and to influence Allied representatives in favor of recognition by indicating its possible future usefulness to the Allies. This program included the following objectives:

1) To set up the Austrian Office as a sort of unofficial consulate to care for the interests of Austrian nationals in Italy.

2) To provide a nucleus for united Austrian action based upon broad democratic principles, the Committee to be set up in such a manner that no Austrian political viewpoint is excluded.

3) To aid in every way possible in the military campaign against Germany. In this connection, the Committee would offer the following:
   a) Contact with a chain of Austrian Partisans in Carinthia. This chain is headed by the brother of Guido Zernatto, former Austrian Minister of the Interior. The code for messages sent to this chain has already been formulated and the head of the chain is now awaiting instructions. He goes under the name of Giovanni and awaits a BBC message addressed to him.
   b) Active cooperation with Allied Propaganda Units. The group offers to make propaganda recordings in a series to be called "Austrians speak to Austrians."
   c) To supply the Allies with strategic information on Austrian industry and internal conditions. To send any Austrians who may have recent knowledge of these conditions to the Allied agencies interested in such information.

4. To come to an agreement with Tito and the Jugoslav Partisans about Partisan activity in Austria and particularly Carinthia. Such an agreement is designed to avoid a repetition of the Carinthian-Slovene difficulties of 1919-1920.

5) To gain the permission of the Allies to form an Austrian Legion which shall fight on the side of the Allies, this Legion to be formed of Austrian deserters from the German Army, POW's who declare a willingness to fight for a free Austria and such refugees and civilians as are now in allied territory.

6) While (5) is being arranged, to work for the immediate separation of Austrian Prisoners of War from the Germans in POW camps.

7) To have the Austrian Kultur Institut in Rome turned over to the Committee in custody.

III

The reaction of emigre Austrians to the attempt to reopen the Austrian Legation has been various (no reaction to the composition of the Committee of Liberation has as yet been reported).

Dr. Hans Rott, former Cabinet associate of Schuschnigg, now leader of the monarchist Free Austria Movement in New York City and Toronto, indicated that he sympathized with the attempt of von Waldenegg. He believes that the latter is merely attempting to resume the official duties in 1944 which were denied him in 1938. He contributed the opinion that only a future Austrian government can legally remove von Waldenegg.

Count Ferdinand Czernin, leader of the small liberal leftist Austrian Action group in New York City similarly supports von Waldenegg on grounds of legal continuity. While holding that the incident in Rome is unimportant, he believes that it may well indicate future movements organized by formerly accredited diplomats. Czernin states that the latter have a prior claim to leadership because of their past official status.

Julius Deutsch, former close associate of Adler and Bauer in Austrian Social Democratic affairs during the Republic, threatened to send a cablegram to Count Sforza warning of the dangers inherent in any connection with an organization which included Berger von Waldenegg and Bishop Hudal. William Ellenbogen and K. H. Sailer, Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Austrian Labor Committee published the following in the July-August number of the Austrian Labor Information: "No Austrian democrat, no Austrian anti-fascist would recognize a confirmed Mussolini follower as representative of a free, independent, and democratic Austria, the rebirth of which is the declared aim of the Moscow declaration."

Without confirmation, it is safe to assume that the London Social Democrats, either inside or outside the Austrian Representative Committee, share the sentiments of the Social Democratic spokesman in New York. Moreover the very considerable number of Austrians in the Free Austria Movement in London, led and dominated by the Communist, Eva Kolmer, can not be expected to surrender the leadership to the Austrian Committee of Liberation in Rome which they hope to obtain for themselves.

IV.

The members of the proposed Committee do not represent the major political groups of democratic opinion in Austria. They are clearly not representatives of the chief refugee organizations. The outstanding members, in view of their long absence from Austria seem to have lost contact with their homeland. Hudal and Bambas have been residents in Rome for more than twenty years. The character of some of them seems to be rather dubious. Others have identified themselves with Austro-fascism and have even assumed leading roles in the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regimes.

The active members, namely, von Waldenegg, Hudal, and Froelichsthal are characterized by observers on the ground as "beamte" and "mediocre." The only person under consideration who might give it some appeal within Austria is Dr. Dobretsberger. He has not as yet committed himself, and in any event, whether he could effect the coordination and obtain the cooperation of the various emigre groups outside Rome is open to serious question.

As originally proposed, this Committee contained pronounced anti-democratic characters. In order to present the appearance of broad representation, there was added a collection of obscure individuals who were supposed to belong to liberal or democratic parties which were, in fact, non-existent.

The technique employed in electing this Committee serves as a further example of the way in which these Austrian leaders worked. The Control Commission permitted a meeting of the Austrian residents.

The Austrian Committee subsequently reported that of the 300 exiles in Rome, "163 Austrian ladies and gentlemen were present." This would indicate that about half the Austrians in Rome appeared. However, an Allied observer who was able to identify sixteen of the audience, in addition to the Austrian leaders, reports that fourteen were Reich Germans rather than Austrians. Bishop Hudal presided, and, after an introductory speech, offered those present a panel of five in addition to himself. He sketched briefly the background of four of these. It is not reported, but presumably Bambas was the one who was omitted. Moreover, Bambas, who claims to be a Social Democrat, was not classified as such at this meeting and the Social Democratic candidate for the Committee was announced as Rudolf Breuer, a follower of Waldenegg. After these brief and incomplete introductions, the Bishop informed his listeners that they would be given the opportunity of approving the panel. He insisted that the group must be considered in toto, not as individuals. Voting was by a show of hands. One hand was raised in the negative.

Certain points in the Program of the Committee of Liberation deserve to be noted. Point 3 offers the Allies direct contact with the Austrian Partisans in Carinthia. As yet there is no evidence of the existence of an Austrian Partisan Movement, although there is abundant evidence that an unknown number of Styrian and Carinthian Austrians, most likely of Slovene descent, have crossed the frontier and joined the Jugoslav Partisans under the command of Tito. Point 4 suggests that the Committee might come to an agreement with Tito and the Jugoslav Partisans in order to avoid friction in the Klagenfurt

Basin, a proposal derived from the erroneous belief that a genuine Austrian Partisan environment exists in that area. Point 5 offers the assistance of an Austrian Legion yet to be created. There is no evidence that this group could be any more successful in organising an Austrian Legion than was an earlier monarchist group which failed dismally. Point 8 suggests that the Austrian Kultur Institute (a former Austrian semi-/government building) be leased by the Swiss Embassy to the Committee. The Swiss Embassy refused, however, and the Austrian Office is now housed at 15 Via Mercadante.

Official Allied recognition of both the Committee and the Austrian Office has thus far been denied. On 21 June, the British Foreign Secretary stated in the House of Commons that the former Austrian Legation had been opened in Rome without the knowledge or approval of His Majesty's Government. The same day, Secretary of State Hull informed the American Consul at Naples that unofficial support or official recognition of any Austrian individual or groups of individuals attempting to form a coalition was not at the time contemplated by the Department. He added that disunity was all too evident and that, furthermore, on the strength of his record, Berger von Waldenegg appeared to be a fascist and persona non grata to the majority of Austrians in the United States.

Bishop Hudal was aware of the British attitude, and possibly that of the United States, for he wrote a memorandum in reply.

Nevertheless, certain points remain to be clarified. The movement has made sufficient headway, without official recognition, to make it obvious that all Austrians in Rome who hope to be accorded political consideration at a later time may feel forced to align themselves behind the Committee of Liberation. Additional evidence of a certain degree of progress is the fact that the Austrian Office is "seeking permission to register all Austrians in the rest of liberated Italy." Bishop Hudel has organized "The Austrian Bishop's Assistance Committee" and has asked the Displaced Persons Bureau of AMG to issue supplementary rations to Austrians. That the Austrian group has attracted some attention may be judged by the complaints of Dr. Willi Nix to the effect that he and his Deutsche Antinasionalsozialistische Vereinigung Süd-Europa "are finding no support with the Allied authorities... This position of isolation he contrasts with the measure of Allied approval received by the Austrian Committee."[1]

As has been indicated, unity among the Austrian exiles did not exist prior to the formation of the Committee, and it does not exist now. While Berger von Waldenegg is not a member of the Committee, "He stresses again and again... the trouble that he has with Dr. Bambas at Committee meetings. The latter is trying to break the monopoly of contacts with Allied agencies now held by the triumvirate of Baron Berger, Baron Froelichsthal, and Dr. Breycha — a monopoly based on security considerations. In Committee meetings, Bambas is apparently alone in his opposition. All the others, including Bishop Hudal and Podhostnik, the Communist, support the members of the Office."[2]

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[1] From material supplied by R & A, OSS outpost, Rome.

[2] *Ibid.*

Appendix. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON LEADERS OF THE COMMITTEE

EGON BARON BERGER VON WALDENEGG, born in 1880, entered the Hapsburg diplomatic service in 1905 and until 1914 held various secretarial posts, one of which was in the Foreign Office. With the disappearance of the Monarchy, he retired to his estates in Styria where he organized the Styrian Heimwehr. In the special autobiography which he submitted, he is careful to refer to this fascist military auxilliary as the "antinationalsozialistischen Heimatschutz." As Minister of Justice under Dollfuss, he was connected with the Court Martial which condemned many Social Democrats and Communists for their participation in the fighting of February, 1934. The Baron fails to mention this phase of his activity, but does admit that he conducted the trials of the assassins of Dollfuss later the same year. From 1934 to 1936 under Schuschnigg, in addition to his duties as Minister of Justice, he was also Minister of Foreign Affairs, directing Austria's foreign policy toward close collaboration with Mussolini. Following the Anschluss, he remained in Italy. To protect him from the clutches ("Zugriff") of the Gestapo, according to current reports, Mussolini had the King confer Italian citizenship upon Berger von Waldenegg. In addition, Mussolini gave him a "special position" in the important insurance firm, the Assicurazioni Generali. When it was evident that the Wehrmacht was about to occupy Italy, the Baron and his wife sought refuge with their good friend Cardinal Sibilia, the former Papal Nuncio to

Vienna. It is to be noted that Mussolini's name does not appear in Berger von Waldenegg's brief autobiography and any suggestion of the former cordial relations which existed between them is studiously omitted.

BISHOP ALOYS HUDAL, born in 1885, ordained a priest in 1908. From 1911 to 1913, he was a Chaplain at the Collegio dell'Anima in Rome. After serving for two years as military Chaplain on the Isonzo front in World War I, he joined the faculty of the University of Graz. Pope Pius XI appointed him Rector of the Collegio dell'Anima in 1922. He helped frame the Austrian Concordat in 1933 and was made Titular Bishop of Ela the same year.

In his brief autobiography, the Bishop takes care to indicate that of his 15 books, six were confiscated and burned by the Nazis while two were proscribed by the Italian authorities. His public utterances and writings, however, create a very different impression. In the introduction to his best known work, The Foundations of National Socialism (1936), he points with pride to the fact that he was the first German-speaking foreign (i.e. non-German) Bishop to have the honor of addressing a gathering of the German community in Rome in the great hall of the Collegio dell'Anima. Present at this May Festival in 1933 were 700 people, among them "the Bishop of Achen, both Reich Ministers (presumably the one to the Quirinal and the one to the Vatican), the leaders of the Stahlhelm organizations, of the NSDAP, SA, and Hitler Youth." The avowed purpose of the book is "to attempt to smooth the way for an understanding of National Socialism from the Christian standpoint." The effort to work out a synthesis of this kind leads the Bishop to the conclusion that "Above all else, the German people are indebted to this spiritual movement (National Socialism) for undermining the concept of human rights which was the foundation of the Weimar structure, and further, the destruction of the faith in formal constructions of law and [illegible] the dialectics of parliamentary life and democracy as understood up to the present" (i.e. 193[illegible]). Bishop Hudal protested strenuously against granting asylum in Austria to such anti-Nazi German clergy as Father Muckermann, Dr. Dietrich von Hildebrandt, and others.

While the Social Democrats put Bishop Hudal in a class with Seyss-Inquart and Guido Schmidt -- men who strove successfully for the undoing of Austria -- Trauttmannsdorf, a young and apparently liberal member of the Waldenegg group in Rome admitted that he was frankly suspicious of the Bishop, pointing out that the latter "waited until his last sermon before the Allies entered Rome to express any anti-German sentiment."

From documents submitted over his signature, it is evident that Bishop Hudal is striving to emphasize his Austrian rather than his German connections. He desires to be known as "The Austrian Bishop" or, as a variant, "The Austrian Bishop in Rome." This he is not: he was born in Austria, but by accepting in 1933 the position of Rector of the Collegio dell'Anima in Rome, a college established for German priests, and supported by German Archdiocesan funds, he severed his connection with the Austrian Church. He is not listed in the register of the

Austrian clergy.

In his official capacity, he was obviously in a position to offer asylum to prominent Austrian refugees and to lend them unofficial but valuable Church support.

DR. VICTOR (Freiherr von) FROELICHSTHAL, born in 1899, while not a member of the Committee of Liberation as it was eventually constituted, is a loyal supporter and active collaborator of both von Waldenegg and Bishop Hudal. He entered the bureaucracy in 1921 and his most important post was that of First Secretary in the Ministry of Education under Schuschnigg. Froelichsthal asserts that, in the tradition of the Austrian Beamtentum, he refrained from identifying himself with any political party until Dollfuss formed his Fatherland Front, which federal employees were forced to join. While this organization was designed to supplant all previous parties, Froelichsthal in his capacity as First Secretary to the Minister of Education was known to have made many recommendations which were determined chiefly by the previous clerical or Christian Social affiliation of the candidate. He was relieved of his duties by Seyss-Inquart in 1939, and, forewarned of impending arrest, he fled to Italy where he obtained Italian citizenship through the intercession of the late Senator Salata. Since 1940, he has been living in Vatican City where, according to his own account, he was in daily touch with Berger von Waldenegg and Dr. Peter Breycha Zuliany.

DR. PETER BREYCHA ZULIANI was born in 1906. While completing his legal studies, he attended the Vienna Commercial Academy. Subsequently, for a number of years he was with the trucking firm of Schenker and Co.[1] in its Hamburg and Munich offices as well as in the home office in Vienna. He became interested in the problems of transportation in the Danubian area and in 1934 entered the Trieste Section of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Later the same year he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was sent to Trieste as Commercial Attache. As he tells his story, he had numerous hair-raising experiences in and around Trieste after March 1938. At one time the Italian Ambassador in Washington, Suvich, interceded in his behalf with the German Ambassador in Rome. It is to be remembered Suvich was particularly detested in Austria. Labor circles considered him one of Mussolini's most servile henchmen, and believed that, as Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs (1932-1936), he was in no small degree responsible for the February 1934 outbreak. Having flown from Trieste to Rome in the same plane with von Waldenegg, he was able to obtain a position, upon the recommendation of Dr. Walter Ernst, a former Austrian administrative officer, as a civilian attached to the office of the Chief Supply Officer for the German Commander-in-Chief of the South. Needing funds to carry out what he terms his "intelligence work," he obtained 160,000 lire from the firm of Giuseppe Ballo in Rome.

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[1] This firm is known as one of the major agents of Nazism for the economic conquest of Europe.

This was in payment for a consignment of soap. Zuliany is vague on the details of this transaction, but the inference is that he was able to divert this soap from the German army to the Italian firm. By such simple devices as removing telephone directories and mixing up orders, Zuliany maintains that he was able to cause delays and even failures in the delivery of vital war materials. Indeed he claims to have waged a one-man campaign of sabotage against the Wehrmacht.

JOSEF PODHOSTNIK, a representative of the working-classes on the Committee of Liberation, was born a Roman Catholic in 1912. During the decade 1928-38 he was active in left-wing Social Democratic and Communist Party organisations. For a few months in 1938 he was Kreisleiter of the underground Communist Party in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Bezirke in Vienna. His activities there were terminated by the Communist Party leadership on the grounds that he was too well known by the police.

FELIX S. SCHORR was born in 1895 and received a limited education. Following his release from a Russian prison camp at the close of the first World War, he became Secretary for the Austrian Red Cross in the Far East. His chief duties consisted in the repatriation of Austrian prisoners of war. After his return, he was steadily employed until 1941 when he lost his job because he could not legally qualify as an Aryan. In 1942, through what he calls "high Church connections," he received employment in the construction of the new buildings for the Pontifico Collegio Germanico ed Hungarico in Rome. He states that he has been active in the present Austrian Office since its inception.

RUDOLF KRONAU, born in 1893, education limited. From 1912 to 1914 he was an actor in the Hoftheater in Vienna. In 1919 he opened an art and antique shop in Bozen but lost this business in 1941 because his father was Jewish. In 1943 he was employed restoring pictures in the Vatican.

ERNST BREUER, the son of a Jewish shopkeeper in Vienna, was born in 1916. After completing a gymnasium education he obtained employment in a photographic business. This served as an introduction to newspaper photography. From the age of 13, he was active in Jewish and socialist youth organizations. After 1934, he was a member of the new Revolutionary Socialist Party. He is reported to have been included on the Committee of Liberation because of his Jewish background and his Socialist activities.

DR. ALFRED BASCHIERA, Catholic, was born in 1904. Although never politically active, in his capacity as a civil court judge, he was forced to join the Fatherland Front in 1934. Late in 1938 he moved to Trieste and then to Rome. He is attached to the Austrian Office as legal and cultural adviser.

MAXIMILIAN NEUFELD, Catholic, born in 1887. Before World War I, he was interested in the theater, but following demobilization, he devoted his entire attention to moving-pictures, at first as operator and then as scenarist. He went to Berlin in 1929 where he was connected with the local office of Universal Pictures. In 1933, because of his "non-Aryan origin" he left Germany and returned to Austria, but his films could not be exhibited in Germany and the Austrian audience was too limited. In 1938, he went to Italy to await his quota number for entry into the United States, and while there worked on the production of films until under German pressure, these were banned. He then went to Spain where he produced two pictures. Returning to Rome in order to bring his wife to Madrid, he was stranded by the collapse of Italy. He is on the Committee of Liberation as the representative of the von Waldenegg group and gives detailed reports to his sponsors on the activities of the Committee.

This completes the summary of available biographical material of the individuals in Rome. There is a prominent Austrian exile, not in Rome, who deserves brief comment. It may be recalled that in the original list of members on the Committee of Liberation which was submitted to the OSS in Rome, the permanent Chairmanship was to go to Dr. Josef Dobretsberger. Moreover, on the Committee as finally elected, Bishop Hudal holds the position of Provisional Chairman. The Waldenegg group is attempting to induce Dr. Dobretsberger to leave Cairo for Rome to act as permanent Chairman of the Austrian Committee of Liberation. What his reaction to these overtures has been is not as yet known.

DR. JOSEF DOBRETSBERGER, born in 1903 is considerably younger than either Berger von Waldenegg or Bishop Hudal. His experience is varied. He held a Professorship of Economics at the University of Graz, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Austrian National Bank, and was Minister for Social Welfare under Schuschnigg. While to anti-fascists generally, this connection with the Schuschnigg regime might be sufficient to disqualify him for the Committee of Liberation, he was and still is considered the most liberal and least fascist-minded member of the Schuschnigg Ministry, from which he eventually resigned because of disagreement with the Chancellor's policies. In the circles in which he moved, he was popular and considered brilliant.

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THE AUSTRIAN COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION IN ROME

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SUMMARY

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It was apparently their intention to present the Allied authorities with a fait accompli, and thus, if possible, force the granting of their request for recognition as an Austrian Committee of Liberation.

Since they represented one of two factions, recognition was withheld, and the Swiss Embassy, as custodian for the German Government, forced them to leave the Legation.

However, they were granted permission to call a meeting of all Austrians in Rome to elect a representative committee as well as to open an Austrian Office. While official recognition has been denied this group, they nevertheless are said to possess a monopoly on communications with the Allied authorities, and by their activities and continued existence tend to create the impression that they are a de facto government in exile.

Brief autobiographies of the leaders in Rome are attached.

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[1] The material upon which this report is almost exclusively based was obtained by the R and A, OSS Outpost in Rome. Since relatives of some of the men discussed are still in Germany, this information should be handled with the greatest of care.

The attempt to reactivate the Austrian Legation in Rome was abortive. The group which initiated this coup were supporters of Baron Berger von Waldenegg, and as such, represented one of two active factions within the Austrian emigration, and did not represent all the exiles in Rome. Furthermore the official representative of the Allied Control Commission pointed out that the government which the Legation purported to represent was non-existent, and that, in any case, the question of recognition could not be decided by Allied agencies in Rome. Finally, the Swiss Embassy, as custodian for the German Government, sent Allied soldiers and Caribinieri to guard the property and requested the Austrians to vacate the premises. The Legation was again closed 6 June.

As an alternative, the Control Commission agreed to permit the opening of an Austrian Office in a room in the Hotel Majestic. Here, Bishop Aloys Hudal, close friend of Berger von Waldenegg, and a staff of five had registered 267 Austrians as of 21 June. Applications were also received for identity cards which when issued were signed by Bishop Hudal.[2] Nationality is determined on the basis of the 1938 requirements. In addition, those who come to the Austrian Office to register are given an opportunity to sign a petition asking Bishop Hudal to form a Committee of Austrian Liberation based on broad democratic principles and consisting of representatives of "the four Austrian political parties - Communist, Liberal, Social Democratic and Christian Social."

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[2] A recent report states that this activity has brought the Bishop into disfavor with Vatican authorities. It is felt that by performing the functions of a police official, the Bishop has demeaned himself and his office.

An intense struggle developed at once over the composition of this Committee. After Berger von Waldenegg had taken the first step toward establishing the Committee, Karl Bambas, an Austrian dentist who had practiced in Rome for some 21 years, claimed that he should be chairman of any such group. He based his claim on his activity in organizing years previously an association of Austrians resident in Rome. Bambas was one of about 30 Austrians who sought sanctuary in Vatican buildings when the Germans entered Rome. He, together with the more active members of this group, had previously rendered what assistance he could to Austrians, Jews, and Allied prisoners. With the assistance of Vatican authorities, Bambas' group provided hiding-places for escaped prisoners and assisted in forwarding messages (particularly from British prisoners) through contacts with the British representative to the Vatican.

The conflict between Bambas and Berger von Waldenegg stems from personal as well as political differences. One incident will suffice as illustration. A young woman exile accused Bambas of immoral approaches. Bishop Hudal, Rector of the Collegio dell' Anima, where the exiles were housed, requested Bambas to move out. Bambas refused and threatened, if he were forced to leave, to give the S.S. the names and report the activities of all 30 of the Austrians who were hiding in the Collegio. While this move caused general indignation in the little colony, it proved effective, and Bambas remained.

The Waldenegg group admits that while Bambas is demagogically inclined, he is nevertheless a man of unquestioned patriotism and without personal political aspirations in the future Austria. As a Social Democrat, Bambas denounced Berger von Waldenegg and Froelichsthal for having held high office under the dictatorships of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. This past connection, he asserts, automatically excludes them from any claim which they might have to set up a representative committee. Bambas insists that at the very least he be made Vice-Chairman of the proposed Committee of Liberation. Bambas has sent letters incorporating these claims and charges to General Eisenhower, General Clark and other high Allied officers.

The Waldenegg faction was for some time in a quandary, since the Control Commission informed the Baron and Froelichsthal that it could not deal with two factions separately, but that if a committee were formed which represented all factions, the Commission would then undertake to forward Austrian requests to the Allied governments.

In mid-June, Waldenegg and his followers were still reluctant to accept Bambas as a member of the Committee of Liberation. By 2 July, however, Bambas had apparently won his minimum demand. On that date, Bishop Hudal sent a communication to the Political Section of the Allied Control Commission which stated that a meeting of Austrians in Rome had elected the following members to constitute an Austrian Committee of Liberation: Temporary Chairman, Bishop Hudal; Vice-Chairman, Karl Bambas; members, Rudolf Kronau, Ernst Breuer, Maximilian Neufeld, and Josef

Podhostnik. Bishop Hudal, in the same communication, reported that the Committee had placed Berger von Waldenegg in charge of the Austrian Office. In reply, the Control Commission acknowledged the receipt of Bishop Hudal's communication, and then pointed out that Allied authorities in Italy were not in a position to accord any recognition to the Committee.

Before the Committee had been constituted in its final form, an eight-point program of action was drawn up. The group obviously was attempting to justify its past activity and to influence Allied representatives in favor of recognition by indicating its possible future usefulness to the Allies. This program included the following objectives:

1) To set up the Austrian Office as a sort of unofficial consulate to care for the interests of Austrian nationals in Italy.

2) To provide a nucleus for united Austrian action based upon broad democratic principles, the Committee to be set up in such a manner that no Austrian political viewpoint is excluded.

3) To aid in every way possible in the military campaign against Germany. In this connection, the Committee would offer the following:
   a) Contact with a chain of Austrian Partisans in Carinthia. This chain is headed by the brother of Guido Zernatto, former Austrian Minister of the Interior. The code for messages sent to this chain has already been formulated and the head of the chain is now awaiting instructions. He goes under the name of Giovanni and awaits a BBC message addressed to him.
   b) Active cooperation with Allied Propaganda Units. The group offers to make propaganda recordings in a series to be called "Austrians speak to Austrians."
   c) To supply the Allies with strategic information on Austrian industry and internal conditions. To send any Austrians who may have recent knowledge of these conditions to the Allied agencies interested in such information.

4. To come to an agreement with Tito and the Jugoslav Partisans about Partisan activity in Austria and particularly Carinthia. Such an agreement is designed to avoid a repetition of the Carinthian-Slovene difficulties of 1919-1920.

5) To gain the permission of the Allies to form an Austrian legion which shall fight on the side of the Allies, this Legion to be formed of Austrian deserters from the German Army, POW's who declare a willingness to fight for a free Austria and such refugees and civilians as are now in allied territory.

6) While (5) is being arranged, to work for the immediate separation of Austrian Prisoners of War from the Germans in POW camps.

7) To have the Austrian Kultur Institut in Rome turned over to the Committee in custody.

III

The reaction of emigre Austrians to the attempt to reopen the Austrian Legation has been various (no reaction to the composition of the Committee of Liberation has as yet been reported).

Dr. Hans Rott, former Cabinet associate of Schuschnigg, now leader of the monarchist Free Austria Movement in New York City and Toronto, indicated that he sympathized with the attempt of von Waldenegg. He believes that the latter is merely attempting to resume the official duties in 1944 which were denied him in 1938. He contributed the opinion that only a future Austrian government can legally remove von Waldenegg.

Count Ferdinand Czernin, leader of the small liberal leftist Austrian Action group in New York City similarly supports von Waldenegg on grounds of legal continuity. While holding that the incident in Rome is unimportant, he believes that it may well indicate future movements organized by formerly accredited diplomats. Czernin states that the latter have a prior claim to leadership because of their past official status.

Julius Deutsch, former close associate of Adler and Bauer in Austrian Social Democratic affairs during the Republic, threatened to send a cablegram to Count Sforza warning of the dangers inherent in any connection with an organization which included Berger von Waldenegg and Bishop Hudal. William Ellenbogen and K. H. Sailer, Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Austrian Labor Committee published the following in the July-August number of the Austrian Labor Information: "No Austrian democrat, no Austrian anti-fascist would recognize a confirmed Mussolini follower as representative of a free, independent, and democratic Austria, the rebirth of which is the declared aim of the Moscow declaration."

Without confirmation, it is safe to assume that the London Social Democrats, either inside or outside the Austrian Representative Committee, share the sentiments of the Social Democratic spokesman in New York. Moreover the very considerable number of Austrians in the Free Austria Movement in London, led and dominated by the Communist, Eva Kolmer, can not be expected to surrender the leadership to the Austrian Committee of Liberation in Rome which they hope to obtain for themselves.

IV.

The members of the proposed Committee do not represent the major political groups of democratic opinion in Austria. They are clearly not representative of the chief refugee organizations. The outstanding members, in view of their long absence from Austria seem to have lost contact with their homeland. Hudal and Bambas have been residents in Rome for more than twenty years. The character of some of them seems to be rather dubious. Others have identified themselves with Austro-fascism and have even assumed leading roles in the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regimes.

The active members, namely, von Waldenegg, Hudal, and Froelichsthal are characterized by observers on the ground as "beamte" and "mediocre." The only person under consideration who might give it some appeal within Austria is Dr. Dobretsberger. He has not as yet committed himself, and in any event, whether he could effect the coordination and obtain the cooperation of the various emigre groups outside Rome is open to serious question.

As originally proposed, this Committee contained pronounced anti-democratic characters. In order to present the appearance of broad representation, there was added a collection of obscure individuals who were supposed to belong to liberal or democratic parties which were, in fact, non-existent.

The technique employed in electing this Committee serves as a further example of the way in which these Austrian leaders worked. The Control Commission permitted a meeting of the Austrian residents.

The Austrian Committee subsequently reported that of the 300 exiles in Rome, "163 Austrian ladies and gentlemen were present." This would indicate that about half the Austrians in Rome appeared. However, an Allied observer who was able to identify sixteen of the audience, in addition to the Austrian leaders, reports that fourteen were Reich Germans rather than Austrians. Bishop Hudal presided, and, after an introductory speech, offered those present a panel of five in addition to himself. He sketched briefly the background of four of these. It is not reported, but presumably Bambas was the one who was omitted. Moreover, Bambas, who claims to be a Social Democrat, was not classified as such at this meeting and the Social Democratic candidate for the Committee was announced as Rudolf Breuer, a follower of Waldenegg. After these brief and incomplete introductions, the Bishop informed his listeners that they would be given the opportunity of approving the panel. He insisted that the group must be considered in toto, not as individuals. Voting was by a show of hands. One hand was raised in the negative.

Certain points in the Program of the Committee of Liberation deserve to be noted. Point 3 offers the Allies direct contact with the Austrian Partisans in Carinthia. As yet there is no evidence of the existence of an Austrian Partisan Movement, although there is abundant evidence that an unknown number of Styrian and Carinthian Austrians, most likely of Slovene descent, have crossed the frontier and joined the Jugoslav Partisans under the command of Tito. Point 4 suggests that the Committee might come to an agreement with Tito and the Jugoslav Partisans in order to avoid friction in the Klagenfurt

Basin, a proposal derived from the erroneous belief that a genuine Austrian Partisan environment exists in that area. Point 5 offers the assistance of an Austrian Legion yet to be created. There is no evidence that this group could be any more successful in organising an Austrian Legion than was an earlier monarchist group which failed dismally. Point 8 suggests that the Austrian Kultur Institute (a former Austrian semi-government building) be leased by the Swiss Embassy to the Committee. The Swiss Embassy refused, however, and the Austrian Office is now housed at 15 Via Mercadante.

Official Allied recognition of both the Committee and the Austrian Office has thus far been denied. On 21 June, the British Foreign Secretary stated in the House of Commons that the former Austrian Legation had been opened in Rome without the knowledge or approval of His Majesty's Government. The same day, Secretary of State Hull informed the American Consul at Naples that unofficial support or official recognition of any Austrian individual or groups of individuals attempting to form a coalition was not at the time contemplated by the Department. He added that disunity was all too evident and that, furthermore, on the strength of his record, Berger von Waldenegg appeared to be a fascist and persona non grata to the majority of Austrians in the United States.

Bishop Hudal was aware of the British attitude, and possibly that of the United States, for he wrote a memorandum in reply.

Nevertheless, certain points remain to be clarified. The movement has made sufficient headway, without official recognition, to make it obvious that all Austrians in Rome who hope to be accorded political consideration at a later time may feel forced to align themselves behind the Committee of Liberation. Additional evidence of a certain degree of progress is the fact that the Austrian Office is "seeking permission to register all Austrians in the rest of liberated Italy." Bishop Hudal has organized "The Austrian Bishop's Assistance Committee" and has asked the Displaced Persons Bureau of AMG to issue supplementary rations to Austrians. That the Austrian group has attracted some attention may be judged by the complaints of Dr. Willi Nix to the effect that he and his Deutsche Antinazionalsozialistische Vereinigung Süd-Europa "are finding no support with the Allied authorities.... This position of isolation he contrasts with the measure of Allied approval received by the Austrian Committee."[1]

As has been indicated, unity among the Austrian exiles did not exist prior to the formation of the Committee, and it does not exist now. While Berger von Waldenegg is not a member of the Committee, "He stresses again and again... the trouble that he has with Dr. Bambas at Committee meetings. The latter is trying to break the monopoly of contacts with Allied agencies now held by the triumvirate of Baron Berger, Baron Froelichsthal, and Dr. Breycha -- a monopoly based on security considerations. In Committee meetings, Bambas is apparently alone in his opposition. All the others, including Bishop Hudal and Podhostnik, the Communist, support the members of the Office."[2]

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1. From material supplied by R & A, OSS outpost, Rome.
2. *Ibid.*

Appendix. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON LEADERS OF THE COMMITTEE

EGON BARON BERGER VON WALDENEGG, born in 1880, entered the Hapsburg diplomatic service in 1905 and until 1911 held various secretarial posts, one of which was in the Foreign Office. With the disappearance of the Monarchy, he retired to his estates in Styria where he organized the Styrian *Heimwehr*. In the special autobiography which he submitted, he is careful to refer to this fascist military auxilliary as the "*antinationalsozialistischen Heimatschutz*." As Minister of Justice under Dollfuss, he was connected with the Court Martial which condemned many Social Democrats and Communists for their participation in the fighting of February, 1934. The Baron fails to mention this phase of his activity, but does admit that he conducted the trials of the assassins of Dollfuss later the same year. From 1934 to 1936 under Schuschnigg, in addition to his duties as Minister of Justice, he was also Minister of Foreign Affairs, directing Austria's foreign policy toward close collaboration with Mussolini. Following the *Anschluss*, he remained in Italy. To protect him from the clutches ("Zugriff") of the *Gestapo*, according to current reports, Mussolini had the King confer Italian citizenship upon Berger von Waldenegg. In addition, Mussolini gave him a "special position" in the important insurance firm, the *Assicurazioni Generali*. When it was evident that the *Wehrmacht* was about to occupy Italy, the Baron and his wife sought refuge with their good friend Cardinal Sibilia, the former Papal Nuncio to

Vienna. It is to be noted that Mussolini's name does not appear in Berger von Waldenegg's brief autobiography and any suggestion of the former cordial relations which existed between them is studiously omitted.

BISHOP ALOYS HUDAL, born in 1885, ordained a priest in 1908. From 1911 to 1913, he was a Chaplain at the Collegio dell'Anima in Rome. After serving for two years as military Chaplain on the Isonzo front in World War I, he joined the faculty of the University of Graz. Pope Pius XI appointed him Rector of the Collegio dell'Anima in 1922. He helped frame the Austrian Concordat in 1933 and was made Tituler Bishop of Ela the same year.

In his brief autobiography, the Bishop takes care to indicate that of his 15 books, six were confiscated and burned by the Nazis while two were proscribed by the Italian authorities. His public utterances and writings, however, create a very different impression. In the introduction to his best known work, The Foundations of National Socialism (1936), he points with pride to the fact that he was the first German-speaking foreign (i.e. non-German) Bishop to have the honor of addressing a gathering of the German community in Rome in the great hall of the Collegio dell'Anima. Present at this May Festival in 1933 were 700 people, among them "the Bishop of Achen, both Reich Ministers (presumably the one to the Quirinal and the one to the Vatican), the leaders of the Stahlhelm organizations, of the NSDAP, SA, and Hitler Youth." The avowed purpose of the book is "to attempt to smooth the way for an understanding of National Socialism from the Christian standpoint." The effort to work out a synthesis of this kind leads the Bishop to the conclusion that "Above all else, the German people are indebted to this spiritual movement (National Socialism) for undermining the concept of human rights which was the foundation of the Weimar structure, and further, the destruction of the faith in formal constructions of law and in the dialectics of parliamentary life and democracy as understood up to the present" (i.e. 1936). Bishop Hudal protested strenuously against granting asylum in Austria to such anti-Nazi German clergy as Father Muckermann, Dr. Dietrich von Hildebrandt, and others.

While the Social Democrats put Bishop Hudal in a class with Seyss-Inquart and Guido Schmidt -- men who strove successfully for the undoing of Austria -- Trauttmannsdorf, a young and apparently liberal member of the Waldenegg group in Rome admitted that he was frankly suspicious of the Bishop, pointing out that the latter "waited until his last sermon before the Allies entered Rome to express any anti-German sentiment."

From documents submitted over his signature, it is evident that Bishop Hudal is striving to emphasize his Austrian rather than his German connections. He desires to be known as "The Austrian Bishop" or, as a variant, "The Austrian Bishop in Rome." This he is not: he was born in Austria, but by accepting in 1933 the position of Rector of the Collegio dell'Anima in Rome, a college established for German priests, and supported by German Archdiocesan funds, he severed his connection with the Austrian Church. He is not listed in the register of the

Austrian clergy.

In his official capacity, he was obviously in a position to offer asylum to prominent Austrian refugees and to lend them unofficial but valuable Church support.

DR. VICTOR (Freiherr von) FROELICHSTHAL, born in 1899, while not a member of the Committee of Liberation as it was eventually constituted, is a loyal supporter and active collaborator of both von Waldenegg and Bishop Hudal. He entered the bureaucracy in 1921 and his most important post was that of First Secretary in the Ministry of Education under Schuschnigg. Froelichsthal asserts that, in the tradition of the Austrian Beamtentum, he refrained from identifying himself with any political party until Dollfuss formed his Fatherland Front, which federal employees were forced to join. While this organization was designed to supplant all previous parties, Froelichsthal in his capacity as First Secretary to the Minister of Education was known to have made many recommendations which were determined chiefly by the previous clerical or Christian Social affiliation of the candidate. He was relieved of his duties by Seyss-Inquart in 1939, and, forewarned of impending arrest, he fled to Italy where he obtained Italian citizenship through the intercession of the late Senator Salata. Since 1940, he has been living in Vatican City where, according to his own account, he was in daily touch with Berger von Waldenegg and Dr. Peter Breycha Zuliany.

DR. PETER BREYCHA ZULIANY was born in 1906. While completing his legal studies, he attended the Vienna Commercial Academy. Subsequently, for a number of years he was with the trucking firm of Schenker and Co.[1] in its Hamburg and Munich offices as well as in the home office in Vienna. He became interested in the problems of transportation in the Danubian area and in 1934 entered the Trieste Section of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Later the same year he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was sent to Trieste as Commercial Attache. As he tells his story, he had numerous hair-raising experiences in and around Trieste after March 1938. At one time the Italian Ambassador in Washington, Suvich, interceded in his behalf with the German Ambassador in Rome. It is to be remembered Suvich was particularly detested in Austria. Labor circles considered him one of Mussolini's most servile henchmen, and believed that, as Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs (1932-1936), he was in no small degree responsible for the February 1934 outbreak. Having flown from Trieste to Rome in the same plane with von Waldenegg, he was able to obtain a position, upon the recommendation of Dr. Walter Ernst, a former Austrian administrative officer, as a civilian attached to the offices of the Chief Supply Officer for the German Commander-in-Chief of the South. Needing funds to carry out what he terms his "intelligence work," he obtained 160,000 lire from the firm of Giuseppe Ballo in Rome.

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[1] This firm is known as one of the major agents of Nazism for the economic conquest of Europe.

This was in payment for a consignment of soap. Zuliany is vague on the details of this transaction, but the inference is that he was able to divert this soap from the German army to the Italian firm. By such simple devices as removing telephone directories and mixing up orders, Zuliany maintains that he was able to cause delays and even failures in the delivery of vital war materials. Indeed he claims to have waged a one-man campaign of sabotage against the *Wehrmacht*.

JOSEF PODHOSTNIK, a representative of the working-classes on the Committee of Liberation, was born a Roman Catholic in 1912. During the decade 1928-38 he was active in left-wing Social Democratic and Communist Party organisations. For a few months in 1938 he was *Kreisleiter* of the underground Communist Party in the 13th, 14th, and 15th *Bezirke* in Vienna. His activities there were terminated by the Communist Party leadership on the grounds that he was too well known by the police.

FELIX S. SCHORR was born in 1895 and received a limited education. Following his release from a Russian prison camp at the close of the first World War, he became Secretary for the Austrian Red Cross in the Far East. His chief duties consisted in the repatriation of Austrian prisoners of war. After his return, he was steadily employed until 1941 when he lost his job because he could not legally qualify as an Aryan. In 1942, through what he calls "high Church connections," he received employment in the construction of the new buildings for the *Pontifico Collegio Germanico ed Hungarico* in Rome. He states that he has been active in the present Austrian Office since its inception.

RUDOLF KRONAU, born in 1893, education limited. From 1912 to 1914 he was an actor in the Hoftheater in Vienna. In 1919 he opened an art and antique shop in Bozen but lost this business in 1941 because his father was Jewish. In 1943 he was employed restoring pictures in the Vatican.

ERNST BREUER, the son of a Jewish shopkeeper in Vienna, was born in 1916. After completing a gymnasium education he obtained employment in a photographic business. This served as an introduction to newspaper photography. From the age of 13, he was active in Jewish and socialist youth organizations. After 1934, he was a member of the new Revolutionary Socialist Party. He is reported to have been included on the Committee of Liberation because of his Jewish background and his Socialist activities.

DR. ALFRED BASCHIERA, Catholic, was born in 1904. Although never politically active, in his capacity as a civil court judge, he was forced to join the Fatherland Front in 1934. Late in 1938 he moved to Trieste and then to Rome. He is attached to the Austrian Office as legal and cultural adviser.

MAXIMILIAN NEUFELD, Catholic, born in 1887. Before World War I, he was interested in the theater, but following demobilization, he devoted his entire attention to moving-pictures, at first as operator and then as scenarist. He went to Berlin in 1929 where he was connected with the local office of Universal Pictures. In 1933, because of his "non-Aryan origin" he left Germany and returned to Austria, but his films could not be exhibited in Germany and the Austrian audience was too limited. In 1938, he went to Italy to await his quota number for entry into the United States, and while there worked on the production of films until under German pressure, these were banned. He then went to Spain where he produced two pictures. Returning to Rome in order to bring his wife to Madrid, he was stranded by the collapse of Italy. He is on the Committee of Liberation as the representative of the von Waldenegg group and gives detailed reports to his sponsors on the activities of the Committee.

This completes the summary of available biographical material of the individuals in Rome. There is a prominent Austrian exile, not in Rome, who deserves brief comment. It may be recalled that in the original list of members on the Committee of Liberation which was submitted to the OSS in Rome, the permanent Chairmanship was to go to Dr. Josef Dobretsberger. Moreover, on the Committee as finally elected, Bishop Hudal holds the position of Provisional Chairman. The Waldenegg group is attempting to induce Dr. Dobretsberger to leave Cairo for Rome to act as permanent Chairman of the Austrian Committee of Liberation. What his reaction to these overtures has been is not as yet known.

DR. JOSEF DOBRETSBERGER, born in 1903 is considerably younger than either Berger von Waldenegg or Bishop Hudal. His experience is varied. He held a Professorship of Economics at the University of Graz, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Austrian National Bank, and was Minister for Social We [illegible] While to anti-fascists generally, this connection with t [illegible] gg regime might be sufficient to disqualify him for the Committee of Liberation, he was and still is considered the most liberal and least fascist-minded member of the Schuschnigg Ministry, from which he eventually resigned because of disagreement with the Chancellor's policies. In the circles in which he moved, he was popular and considered brilliant.

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Cancelled.
Topics in this report will be covered in report 2673.